

My name is Suzanne Garaffa and I am from West Hartford. I am testifying on the Governor's proposed budget H.B. No. 5037 (COMM) AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023 that unfortunately does not include critical funding for our safety net providers and their employees. After decades of underfunding, Connecticut's direct support providers are in crisis mode because the effects of the pandemic have impacted their ability to attract and retain direct care workers and other employees.

The whole CCCI system is under such stress that many of us are suffering badly. Here are some examples from my life.

In Oct. I went from HUD housing to Section 8 housing, and I said at the time that I would be fine with finding caregivers, but now I can't find any PCA's. I started an interview with a caregiver last November, and the person only got approved two days ago. Because it took so long, I lost her. When I called Allied several times, they kept saying "Send this and that: driver's license, etc." Then they told me that they never got the materials, but then all of a sudden they called me to say it was approved, so they must have gotten the materials at some point.

CCCI has been telling me that if I don't get back-up caregivers, they will take me off the program. When I call CCCI and say I can't find a PCA, they say "call Allied." I have sat two and a half hours on hold before Allied answers. But then they tell you that if you are rude, they will hang up on you. I am very angry because people are treating us like garbage.

CCCI has a list of caregivers with background checks who are supposed to be available. 99.9% of the people I have interviewed recently have had serious background issues. As required, I report my reasons for not hiring the people; it is a lot of recording and a lot of trouble, and it doesn't do any good. The same people that I have turned down show up again and again on the CCCI list. What is the point of my recording everything if I am not listened to?